

# Marine Turtle Newsletter

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Navy. We would especially like to acknowledge the efforts of the Instituto Nacional de Pesca.

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#### RECAPTURE OF A "LIVING-TAGGED" KEMP'S RIDLEY

During 1980, John R. and Lupe P. Hendrickson used autografting and chemical procedures in an experimental attempt to produce permanent living tags on approximately 800 hatchling sea turtles (Hendrickson and Hendrickson, 1981a, 1981b; see Editorial, Marine Turtle Newsletter, 1982, 22, 1-2, for a photograph). After 10-11 months, the majority of these turtles were released. The recent recapture of one of these turtles furnished the rare opportunity to evaluate a living tag after a prolonged period in the wild. The recaptured turtle was a Kemp's ridley which had been headstarted by the Galveston Laboratory of the National Marine Fisheries Service (under Mexican permit No. 1147 and U.S. Fish and Wildlife permit No. PRT-2-4481) and was released on June 2, 1981 near Padre Island National Seashore, Texas. On March 17, 1982, during a period of strong onshore winds, it was found alive and in good condition on a beach ca. 23 km northeast of its release site. During the 289 days since its release into the Gulf of Mexico it had grown from a weight of 1037 g and a carapace length of 17.7 cm to a weight of 2746 g and a carapace length of 25.5 cm.

This turtle had acquired its living tag at an age of 7 weeks during August of 1980. The living tag consisted of a reciprocal tissue graft in which a disc of carapace tissue was exchanged with a disc of plastral tissue. This resulted in a white disk on the dark carapace and a dark disk on the white plastron. The graft on the carapace (located between the 2nd and 3rd costal scutes) had enlarged and darkened slightly. Additionally the border between the 2nd and 3rd costal scutes had darkened considerably. Nevertheless, the graft was still readily visible. The plastral graft, however, was not readily visible; either the graft had failed or the grafted tissue had not retained its melanistic properties. The turtle had its Monel tag intact, so there was no question of its identity.

The NMFS project is only one facet of an international effort to protect Kemp's ridley. Other agencies involved include the Instituto Nacional de Pesca (Mexico), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the U.S. Navy. We would especially like to acknowledge the efforts of the Instituto Nacional de Pesca.

Hendrickson, J.R. and L.P. Hendrickson. 1981a. "Living tags" for sea turtles. Final report to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Contract No. 14-16-0002-80-229), 25 pp.

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